

# Christian Apologetics

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# The Big Picture of Apologetics

- Defending our faith essentially comes down to two major questions:
  1. Does God exist?
  2. How has He revealed himself to us (why do we think that the Bible is God's word)?

# Summary of Week 1 - 4

- We are commanded in scripture to always be ready to give a “defense” of why we believe in Jesus.
- We can know truth through observation and reason.
- God has revealed himself to us in “general” revelation.
  - Creation
  - Design
  - Moral Law

# Summary Week 5: The Bible (part 1)

- We are now moving from general revelation to special revelation – Is the Bible really God’s word?
- We are building two reasonable approaches to claiming the bible is God’s word
  - Miracles authenticate the Bible’s message from God
  - Jesus is God and He authenticated the biblical writings in His teachings
- The history of the Bible (how we got it)
  - God’s inspiration
  - Discovering the Canon

# Biblical Translations – How did we get them?

- Old Testament books written between 1500 and 500 BC.
- Before the printing press – hand copies were carefully made as the originals wore out
- 450 BC Ezra collects the books of the OT.
- 250 BC Hebrew Scriptures is translated into Greek – Septuagint (this is the Bible Jesus used).
- AD 45? – 100 NT books are written by the apostles.
- AD 100 – 500 NT books are copied and distributed across the known world.
- AD 396 Council of Carthage lists 27 NT as the official list in response to heresies.
- AD 410 – Latin Vulgate is created from the ancient Hebrew and Greek copies (this Bible is used for the next 1000 years).
- AD 1382 – first complete English Bible is translated from Latin.
- AD 1455 - First printed book – the Gutenberg Latin Bible.
- AD 1525 – Tyndale translates the Greek NT into English (he is later martyred for his work).
- AD 1555 – Queen Mary (Bloody Mary) outlaws the English Bible for Protestants.
- AD 1560 – Geneva Bible is created by exiles from England, this Bible is the one the Pilgrims brought to America.
- AD 1611 – King James Bible is created from Greek and Hebrew texts.
- 1611 until now – lots of refinements to translations.

# Week 6: The Bible (part 2) Reliability of the New Testament

- Objectives:
  - To understand why New Testament (NT) reliability is important.
  - To understand how we know the New Testament to be reliable.



## Why do we care about NT Reliability

- If NT is not reliable and historically accurate, then Christianity is a hoax.
- Christianity stands or falls based on truth of an event in history, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- If this event did not happen, then as Paul put it, “Your faith is worthless...and we (Christians) are of all men most to be pitied.” (1 Cor 15:17, 19)

# How do you determine any ancient document's reliability?

- Bibliographical Test – how accurate our copies are compared to the originals.
- Internal Evidence Test – an examination of the credibility of what is written.
- External Evidence Test – an examination of whether other historical material confirms or denies the internal testimony of the document.

# Bibliographical Test of the NT – Is it accurate compared to the originals?

- God's instructs Moses to write down the first 5 books of the Bible.
- Lots of copies (no other old document comes close).
- Copies were made a short time after the originals.
- Corroborating ancient documents allow us to construct the entire NT except for 11 verses.
- The accuracy of the copies authenticates the NT.
- Conclusion – we have an accurate copy of the original. But is it trustworthy?

# Internal Tests of Reliability

- Is the testimony early?
- Do we have multiple, independent, eyewitness sources?
- Are the eyewitnesses trustworthy (did the embellish or exaggerate)?



# NT Early Testimony

- All NT books (27 different manuscripts) were written before A.D. 100
  - Early Church fathers quoted passages in letters dated between A.D. 95-110
  - Separation of writers indicates that the letters were written even earlier since it takes time to circulate the letters
  - The destruction of the temple is not mentioned – this dates the letters before A.D. 70
  - The book of Acts makes no mention of the death of Paul or James. This dates the books before A.D. 62
  - Most scholars believe that Paul's letters were dated between 40 and 50 A.D.

# Multiple, independent, eyewitness

- Peter, Paul, and John all claim to be eyewitnesses. Luke claims to have gotten his information from eyewitnesses.
- NT writers name others that saw the resurrection.
- Writers challenge their audience to refute their eyewitness (Acts 26:24-28)
- 9 different authors of the NT

## Trustworthy Eyewitnesses (top ten reasons to believe they told the truth)

- Included embarrassing details about themselves
- Included embarrassing details and sayings of Jesus
- Left in demanding sayings of Jesus
- Carefully distinguished Jesus' words from their own
- Included events related to the resurrection that they would not have invented

## Trustworthy Eyewitnesses (top ten reasons to believe they told the truth)

- Included more than 30 historically confirmed people
- Include divergent details
- They challenge readers to check out verifiable facts, even facts about miracles
- They describe miracles like other historical events
- Abandoned their long-held sacred beliefs and practices, adopted new ones, and did not deny their testimony under persecution or threat of death.

# External Evidence Tests

- Other Historical documents
- Archeology

# Other Historical Documents

- Josephus
  - AD 66 Jews revolt against Rome
  - Josephus surrenders and is taken to Rome to serve as an historian
  - In Rome, he writes the history of the Jews
  - His accounts of Jesus match those in the Gospels.
- Non-Christian Sources
- Conclusion – other documents confirm the NT, but they don't say they believe Jesus rose from the dead. They report that his disciples certainly did.

# Archeology

- Luke – the master historian
- John – also accurate in his descriptions of the times.



# Summary

- We have an accurate copy of the early and eyewitness testimony found in the New Testaments documents.
- We have good reason to believe that the NT writers were honest men who meticulously and faithfully recorded what they say as indicated by historical and archaeological facts.
- We can therefore conclude that the New Testament is a reliable set of documents.

# For next week...



Did Jesus really  
rise from the  
dead?